Listing of Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the first and second gas outlet devices ~~(4, 5)~~ include gas guidance elements which are arranged adjacent to the respective ~~at least one~~ gas outlet aperture ~~(29)~~.

10. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the first and second gas outlet devices ~~(4, 5)~~ are ~~in each case configured~~ in the form of a nozzle.

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 10, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the nozzle ~~(4, 5)~~ includes a nozzle plate ~~(28)~~ which extends transversely to the transport path over its full width and is arranged parallel to the transport path, nozzle apertures ~~(29)~~ being provided in the nozzle plate ~~(28)~~ to allow the gaseous drying medium to pass through.

12. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 11, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the nozzle apertures ~~(29)~~ include elongated slits.

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 11, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the nozzle apertures ~~(29)~~ include bores arranged in a row transversely to the direction of the transport path.

14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 11, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein at least two rows of nozzle apertures ~~(29)~~ are arranged side-by-side in the direction of the transport path.

15. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the regulating means ~~(18, 19)~~ include a flap which is arranged in the first ~~(8)~~ or second ~~(9)~~ feed line such that the respective feed line ~~(8, 9)~~ is at least partially closable with the flap.

16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the regulating means ~~(18, 19)~~ include a valve.

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein pressure sensor means ~~(10, 12)~~ are arranged between the ~~respective~~ regulating means ~~(18, 19)~~ and the gas outlet devices ~~(4, 5)~~ for detecting a pressure generated by the respective gas flow, the control means ~~(35)~~ controlling the regulating means ~~(18, 19)~~ in dependence on the pressure detected by the respective pressure sensor means ~~(10, 12)~~.

18. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the transport means include rollers ~~(2, 3)~~ which are arranged above and below the transport path and are driveable to transport the treated articles ~~(1)~~.

19. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 18, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein no rollers ~~(2, 3)~~ are arranged between the first gas outlet device ~~(4)~~ and the second gas outlet device ~~(5)~~.

20. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 18, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the first and second gas outlet devices ~~(4, 5)~~ each have recesses ~~(33)~~ for the rollers ~~(3)~~ in edges arranged transversely to the direction of the transport path.

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the apparatus includes a closed housing ~~(6)~~ which surrounds the apparatus and has an entry opening ~~(7)~~ for introducing the treated articles ~~(1)~~ and an exit opening ~~(31)~~ for discharging the treated articles ~~(1)~~.

22. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 21, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein an evacuation duct ~~(27)~~ is provided to evacuate the gaseous drying medium from the housing ~~(6)~~.

23. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 22, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein

extraction means ~~(23)~~ are associated with the evacuation duct ~~(27)~~,

further pressure sensor means ~~(24)~~ are arranged in the housing ~~(6)~~ at a distance from the gas outlet devices ~~(4, 5)~~, and

the control means ~~(36)~~ are configured to control the extraction means ~~(23)~~ in such a way that a pressure detected by the further pressure sensor means ~~(24)~~ is maintained at a constant predefined value.

24. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 21, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the housing ~~(6)~~ includes a first and second housing part, the transport means

~~(2, 3)~~ and the first ~~(4)~~ and second ~~(5)~~ gas outlet devices being accommodated in the first housing part and the fan means ~~(16, 17)~~ and the regulating means ~~(18, 19)~~ being accommodated in the second housing part ~~(6)~~.

25. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 24, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein there is provided an intake duct ~~(26)~~ for fresh gaseous drying medium arranged between the first and second housing parts.

26. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein at least one temperature sensor ~~(11, 13)~~ and at least one gas heating means are arranged in the first ~~(8)~~ or second ~~(9)~~ feed line, and the control means are configured to control the gas heating means in such a way that the temperature detected by the at least one temperature sensor is regulated to a predefined value.

27. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the apparatus includes at least two pairs of first ~~(4)~~ and second ~~(5)~~ gas outlet devices.

28. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the apparatus is configured for drying ~~plate-like~~ plate-shaped treated articles ~~(1)~~.

29. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 40, ~~8,~~ ~~characterised in that~~ wherein means ~~(38)~~ for detecting a thickness of the treated articles ~~(1)~~ are provided, and the control means ~~(35)~~ are so configured that they control the fan means ~~(16, 17)~~ to reverse the gas flow either through the first gas outlet device ~~(4)~~ or through the

second gas outlet device ~~(5)~~ if the thickness of the treated articles exceeds a predefined thickness.

30. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ according to claim 29, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the means for detecting the thickness of the treated articles ~~(1)~~ include sensor means ~~(38)~~ for determining the thickness of the treated articles ~~(1)~~.

31. (Canceled)

32. (New) A method for drying of treated articles, comprising:

conveying the treated articles along a predefined transport path in a continuous manner,

generating first and second gas streams via fan means from a gaseous drying medium,

regulating flow of the first gas stream to a first gas outlet device,

directing flow of the first gas stream from the first gas outlet device onto the treated article from above the predefined path,

regulating flow of the second gas stream to a second gas outlet device,

directing flow of the second gas stream from the second outlet device onto the treated article from below the predefined path,

controlling the fan means to regulate the temperatures of the first gas stream and/or the second gas stream to predefined values.

33. (New) A method according to claim 32, further comprising:

balancing the flows of the first and second gas streams such that the treated articles are maintained in suspension at not less than one location.

34. (New) A method according to claim 32, further comprising:

regulating the temperatures by controlling the rotational speed of fan means used to generate the gas streams from the gaseous drying medium.

35. (New) A method according to claim 32, further comprising:

detecting a thickness of the treated article, and

reversing the direction of either the first gas stream or the second gas stream if the thickness of the treated article exceeds a predefined thickness.

36. (New) A method according to claim 32, further comprising:

regulation of the first gas stream and/or the second gas stream is by pressure regulation.

37. (New) A method according to claim 36, further comprising

detecting first and second pressures associated with the respective gas streams in respective first and second feed lines between fan means and the respective gas outlet devices.

38. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein the treated article is a plate-shaped article.

39. (New) A method according to claim 32, further comprising discharging gaseous drying medium.

40. (New) An apparatus for drying treated articles, comprising

transport means capable of continuously transporting the treated articles along a predefined transport path,

a first feed line connected to a gaseous drying medium through fan means, regulating means for regulating flow of the gaseous drying medium through the first feed line, the first feed line connected to a first gas outlet device, the first gas outlet device arranged above the transport path, the first gas outlet device having at least one gas outlet aperture facing towards the transport path,

a second feed line connected to the gaseous drying medium through fan means, regulating means for regulating flow of the gaseous drying medium through the second feed line, the second feed line connected to the second gas outlet device, the second gas outlet device arranged below the transport path, the second gas outlet device having at least one gas outlet aperture facing towards the transport path,

at least one temperature sensor for detecting a temperature of the gas flow in the first and/or second feed line,

a control means configured to control the regulating means,

the control means being configured to control the fan means such that the temperatures of the respective gas flows are regulated to predefined values.

41. (New) An apparatus according to claim 40, further comprising a discharge opening.